

2008 Award Citations

Simon Newcomb Award, to Gary Seronik (Victoria Centre)

Gary Seronik has authored numerous articles and books about astronomy since he began writing for *Sky & Telescope*® magazine in 1996. Gary has been a member of RASC since 1993, and is currently a member of Victoria Centre. An experienced observer and telescope maker, Gary joined the staff of S&T full-time as an associate editor in 1998. Astronomy has been a life-long passion for Gary -- he began subscribing to S&T in 1973 when he was only 12 years old!

Gary has enjoyed a wide range of observing pursuits, from studying intricate details on the surface of the Moon, to seeking out "faint fuzzies." One of his favourite activities has been binocular observing, as regular readers of S&T know from his popular monthly Binocular Highlight column, which has appeared in the magazine since 1999. A compilation of his articles, *Binocular Highlights: 99 Celestial Sights for Binocular Users* was published in 2007 as part of the *Sky & Telescope* Stargazing Series.

Gary's favourite telescope target has been the Moon. His lunar-observing and imaging skills have been put to good use at S&T. Gary has looked after Charles A. Wood's monthly Exploring the Moon column, and he served as editor for Wood's highly regarded book, *The Modern Moon*, published in 2004. Gary was also editor for the new edition of Antonín Růkl's *Atlas of the Moon* -- a classic work republished in 2004. The new revision cleverly incorporates design improvements without diminishing Růkl's original superb artwork. But of all the Moon products he has helped bring to fruition, Gary is proudest of the *Field Map of the Moon*, published in 2007. He regards these maps as the ideal telescopic companion for dedicated lunar observers.

Gary has ground mirrors for numerous homebuilt telescopes, several of which appeared in the pages of S&T. Many readers will remember articles describing his 6-inch f/9 planetary Newtonian and his 8-inch f/4 "travelscope." His current favourite instrument is a recently completed 12.75-inch Dobsonian "travelscope," which has already flown with him to a number of far-flung locations, including Costa Rica. His knowledge of optics and equipment has served him well as editor of the magazine's Amateur Telescope Making department and as a frequent contributor to S&T Test Reports. His writing has undoubtedly inspired amateur astronomers to build their own telescopes and make use of them for observing.

Gary has also encouraged many amateur astronomers to write articles for publication. Victoria Centre members have had the benefit of his mentoring to improve their writing skills, and he has largely been responsible for giving them the confidence to publish their work. Gary has taken time out of his busy schedule to participate in many star parties. He is always a sought-after speaker at star parties; however, he often prefers to just hang out with the other observers on the field.

Any issue of *Sky & Telescope* magazine or his books contain many examples of Gary's excellent style of writing, which popularizes amateur astronomy to an exceedingly large readership. Gary never fails to present amateur astronomy as an exciting and rewarding pastime and vocation, and he encourages others to do the same.